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Wednesday, March 8, 2017 metro.us | t: MetroPhilly | f: MetroPhilly

ARE BENNIFER BACK TOGETHER?

Maybe J-Lo can turn Sad Affleck's frown upside down. 13

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A DAY WITHOUT WOMEN

Women demonstrate their political, economic and social clout on International Women's Day. 4

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EX-DICTATOR NORIEGA IN CRITICAL CONDITION

1 Panamanian former dictator Manuel Noriega was rushed into surgery for a second time on Tuesday after suffering a hemorrhage from an operation to remove a benign tumor from his brain, his family and lawyer said.

"He has a major brain hemorrhage and is in serious condition," his daughter Lorena Noriega told reporters outside the Santo Tomas hospital

where he was operated on, describing his condition as "critical".

The 83-year-old Noriega ruled Panama from 1983 to 1989, spying for the CIA before his drug trafficking and brutal regime sparked a massive U.S. invasion in 1989. REUTERS

WIKILEAKS CLAIMS TROVE OF CIA HACKING TOOLS

2 Anti-secrecy group WikiLeaks said it had obtained a top-secret trove of hacking tools used by the CIA to break into phones, communication apps and other electronic devices, and published confidential documents on those programs. Among the most noteworthy WikiLeaks claims are that the Central Intelligence Agency, in partnership with other U.S. and foreign agencies, has been able to bypass the encryption on popular messaging apps such as WhatsApp, Telegram and Signal, by hacking phones that use Google's Android platform to collect audio and message traffic before encryption is applied. The information in the documents would amount to yet another breach of classified material stolen in recent years from U.S. intelligence agencies. REUTERS

TRUMP WORKING TO BRING DOWN DRUG PRICES

3 President Donald Trump said he is developing a plan that will encourage competition in the drug industry and bring down prices for medicines, as the House of Representatives leadership unveiled a new health care plan. "I am working on a new system where there will be competition in the Drug Industry. Pricing for the American people will come way down!" Trump said in a Twitter post. REUTERS

EpiPen GETTY IMAGES

HILLARY PHOTOBOMB

5 President Donald Trump walks in a corridor of the White House to greet visitors on Tuesday, while a portrait of Hillary Clinton hangs on the wall. GETTY IMAGES

5 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

UBER LOOKING FOR CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

4 Uber Technologies Inc.'s chief executive officer, Travis Kalanick, said the ride-hailing company was looking for a chief operating officer. "This morning I told the Uber team that we're actively looking for a Chief Operating Officer: a peer who can partner with me to write the next chapter in our journey," Kalanick said in a blog post. The post comes more than a week after Kalanick said, "I must fundamentally change as a leader and grow up," following a video that showed him arguing with an Uber driver over rates. "This is the first time I've been willing to admit that I need leadership help and I intend to get it," Kalanick, 40, had said. Last week, the company asked a senior executive to leave for failing to disclose a sexual harassment allegation stemming from his tenure at Alphabet Inc.'s Google. REUTERS

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Protests, pride mark nationwide 'A Day Without a Woman' in Philadelphia

The demonstration is part of the observance today of International Women's Day.

SAM NEWHOUSE
@scnewhouse
sam.newhouse@metro.us

When Philadelphia City Councilwoman Helen Gym heard that two-thirds of her female staffers were taking the day off from work today, she didn't get angry. In fact, she was pleased.

"I'm glad to support all of my female staffers who will be on strike tomorrow," Gym said on Tuesday. "They will be missed tomorrow, and we'll see how it goes without them."

They will be supporting "A Day Without a Woman," a nationwide event that coincides with International Women's Day. Organizers of the massive Women's March on Washington in January are spearheading "A Day Without a Woman."

The nationwide demonstration is intended to show "the enormous value that women of all backgrounds add to our socio-economic system — while receiving lower wages and experiencing greater inequities, vulnerability to discrimination, sexual harassment, and job insecurity," organizers said.

In Philly, many female teachers have already announced plans to skip work today, as part of the protest. There will also be an International Women's Day march, beginning at Logan Square in the afternoon; and a gathering beforehand for children and parents to make signs at Aviator Park. The day will end with a benefit concert.

National Co-Chairs of Women's March Carmen Perez, Linda Sarsour and Tamika D. Mallory attend the Women's March on Washington on January 21, 2017 in Washington, DC. GETTY IMAGES

> *"Our schools simply could not function without the work of women."*
>
> Philadelphia Federation of Teachers

The Philadelphia Federation of Teachers is organizing pickets outside various Philly public schools this morning, protesting the fact that teachers haven't had raises in the last five years.

Several of the teachers at the Science Leadership Academy are expected to skip work today, the Inquirer reported. "Our schools simply could not function without the work of women," the PFT said.

"'A Day Without a Woman' should remind us that women's labor — paid, unpaid, and emotional — keeps our city and this country running," Gym said.

Organizers are encouraging women who can't skip work today to mark the protest by taking the day off from paid and unpaid labor, avoiding shopping for one day (except at small, women- and minority-owned businesses), and by wearing red in solidarity.

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On Women's Day eve, statue of girl stares down Wall Street bull

PETER A SZEKELY

As many American women prepare to draw attention to their role in the workplace, a Wall Street firm on Tuesday put up a statue of a girl in front of Lower Manhattan's well-known bronze charging bull, as if to fearlessly stare it down.

Placing the diminutive, grade school-aged girl in front of the massive bull on the eve of International Women's Day was a way of calling attention to the lack of gender diversity on corporate boards and the pay gap of women working in financial services, a spokeswoman for State Street Global Advisors said.

"A lot of people talk about gender diversity, but we really felt we had to take it to a broader level," said Anne McNally, whose firm is an investment management subsidiary of State Street Corp.

In conjunction with International Women's Day on Wednesday, many American woman are planning to stay home from work, which has led some schools to cancel classes.

Organizers asked women who cannot afford to miss a day of work to limit their shopping to female-owned businesses or to wear red.

"We're actively pursing that it stays for a month," she said. "If the city decides that it should stay in perpetuity, we're absolutely on board with that." REUTERS

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Cybersecurity expert on latest Wikileaks revelations: Nothing to see here

Does latest data dump mean people should throw out their smartphones?

SAM NEWHOUSE
@scnewhouse
sam.newhouse@metro.us

GETTY IMAGES

Metro spoke to cybersecurity expert Bruce Schneier about the latest revelations from Wikileaks about U.S. government spying and what they mean to regular people. The leaked documents, which appear to be from the Central Intelligence Agency, describes software tools that the agency uses to hack into cellphones, computers and internet-connected televisions.

Metro: Do these revelations from Wikileaks surprise you at all?

Schneier: Not in the least. What's the news here? Computers are hackable, this isn't news. It doesn't change a thing.

M: Should people get rid of their devices?

S: No. Is your phone spying on you? Yes, of course it is, that's how it works. My phone knows where I am, your phone knows where you are, that's how we're talking to each other. My phone knows my email and it knows what I searched on Google. It is the perfect spying device. Google and Apple and Facebook and AT&T are all using it to spy on you.

M: Is it significant they hacked Whatsapp and Signal? People thought those apps were the safe ones.

S: Those are. They're not hacking the apps. They're hacking the underlying operating system. It doesn't matter what encryption you use if someone reads the message before you encrypt it.

M: Should U.S. citizens worry that the CIA is invading their privacy?

S: No. The CIA, if they follow the law, doesn't spy on us, it spies on foreigners. The problem is they're hoarding vulnerabilities that could make us safer. Instead of fixing them to make us all safer, they use them to make us all vulnerable. What should normal people do about it? I don't know. What were they doing yesterday? Why should it change?

This interview was condensed and edited for clarity.

Notice is hereby given that proposals will be accepted by the Philadelphia Housing Authority for Solicitation No. P-004707 – **Medical and Human Services Career Training Services**. Proposals are **due no later than 11:00 a.m. on March 17, 2017** at 3100 Penrose Ferry Rd., Philadelphia, PA 19145. Late proposals will not be considered.

A request for a copy of the solicitation should be directed to william.cook@pha.phila.gov. Interested parties can also visit www.pha.phila.gov and click on Business Opportunity for more details. PHA encourages minority, woman-owned and Section 3 businesses to submit bids and participate in joint ventures.

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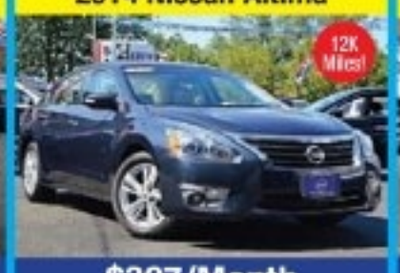

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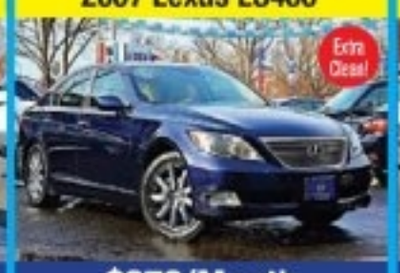

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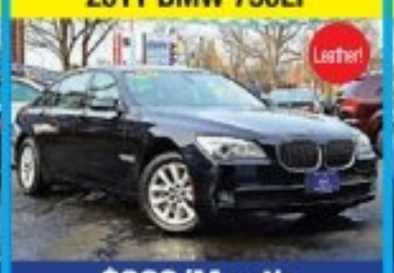

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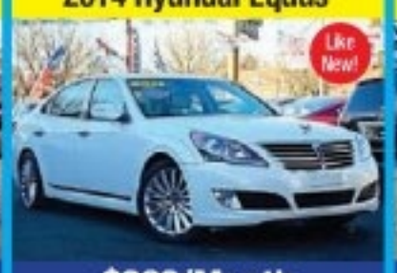

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EXECUTIVE ORDER

Travel ban could have health implications for millions of underserved Americans

President Donald Trump's new travel ban could mean a loss of health care providers in some the country's poorest areas.

There are 7,000 doctors from Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen — the six countries targeted in Trump's new executive order — who work in the United States. Collectively, they keep more than 14 million doctor appointments annually, two million of which are kept in areas facing doctor shortages, according to a report by the Boston-based Immigrant Doctors Project.

A Somali doctor meets with a patient. WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

"These doctors are helping Americans in rural areas and in medically underserved areas — like some parts of the Rust Belt and Appalachia — live healthier and more productive lives," said Mitra Akhtari, one of the team of 10 Harvard and MIT researchers who spent the last three weeks working to produce the analysis.

"These doctors have been making critical contributions as health care professionals in our communities. We are hopeful that this new analysis will show another critical role immigrants play in the fabric of our country."

Though immigrant doctors might not be expelled as a result of Turmp's new travel ban, they could be impeded from leaving the U.S. to visit family because they might not be allowed to return — forcing doctors to choose between their families and the place they've made home. ERIN TIERNAN

Lawmakers to outlaw gay

Five states and Washington, D.C., have passed laws outlawing the practice.

MADELINE PRESLAND
@MetroPhilly
letters@metro.us

Gay conversion therapy did not end after New York City's Stonewall Riots of 1969 nor after the national legalization of same-sex marriage in 2015.

On the contrary, advocates of the long-discredited practice applauded the election of Donald Trump and hope his administration and the Republican Congress will ward off attempts to outlaw it.

But a group of Pennsylvania legislators say they aim to protect LGBT youth in the state by adopting a law that would ban gay conversion therapy.

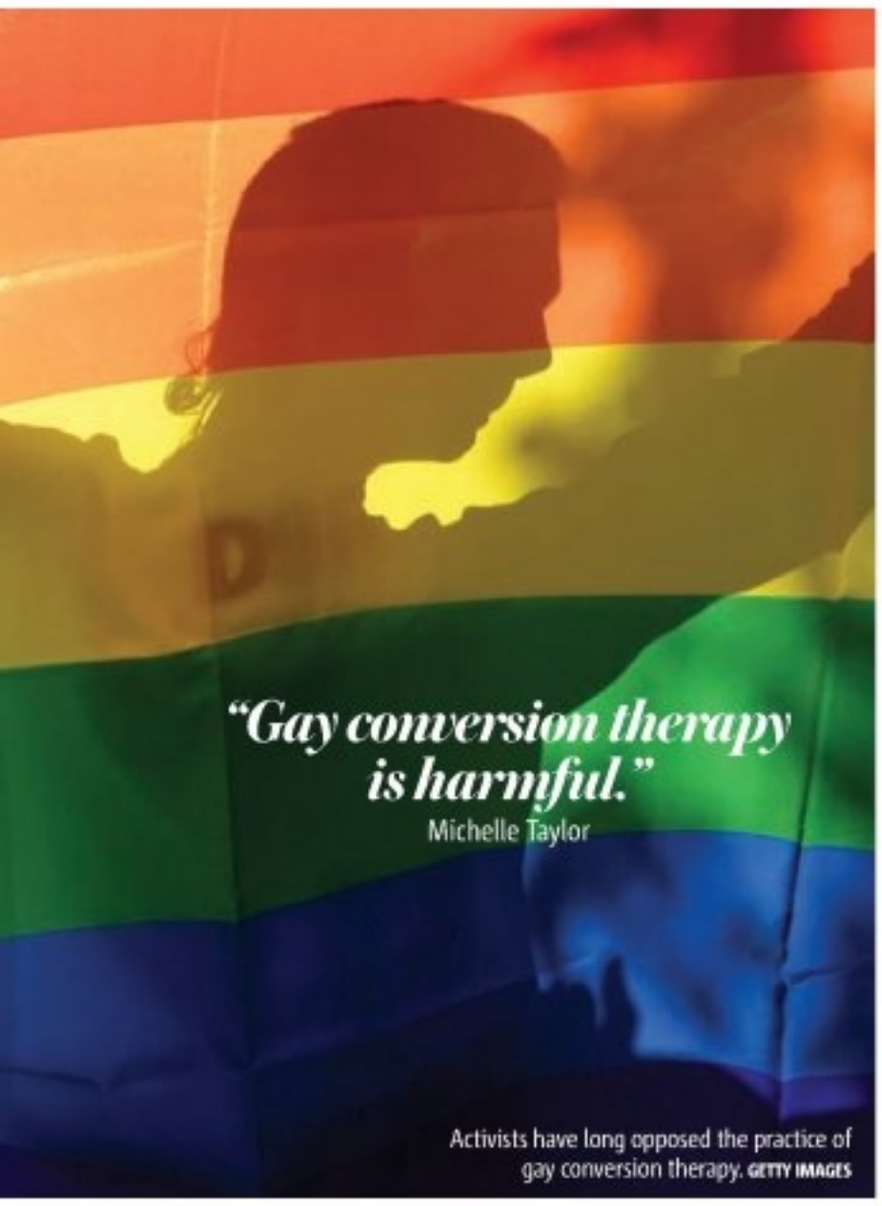
If passed, Pennsylvania Senate Bill 44 will "prohibit mental health professionals from engaging in sexual orientation change efforts with an individual under 18 years of age."

State Rep. Brian Sims, a Philadelphia Democrat, originally introduced legislation to ban the practice in 2013. He endorses Senate Bill 44 and plans to reintroduce his bill in the House later this year.

While the Trump administration aims to weaken protections for the LGBT community, Sims believes 2017 is the year for advancing LGBT rights in Pennsylvania. To secure passage of the bill, he hopes to educate his Republican colleagues who are the majority party in both the Senate and the House.

"Every day, more Republicans are realizing that if they want to be Republicans in 2025, they need to stop seeming like they are stuck in 1955," Sims said. "Moderate to centrist Republicans see support for LGBT rights from their constituency."

Any "reparative" or "conversion" therapy designed to change a person's homosexual orientation is opposed by the American Medical Association, the American Psychiatric Association and other institutions that set standards for acceptable and effective



Activists have long opposed the practice of gay conversion therapy. GETTY IMAGES

weigh bills therapy

mental health treatment. All major mental health organizations say that the practice is harmful for children and adults alike.

Social worker and activist Michelle Taylor recently used Twitter to blast local psychologist Dr. Umar Johnson, who she said is among the few harmful mental health professionals who continue these practices, despite condemnation from his peers.

"He's public about his homophobia," Taylor said. "It's sickening that people believe what he says."

Johnson did not respond to interview requests. He publicly states that the LGBT community is "confused" and has said that gay educators should not be allowed to work in schools.

Taylor believes that professionals like him encourage parents to seek conversion treatments when their children come out.

"This goes against everything we stand for," she said. "If you are a psychiatrist, psychologist or social worker, you commit to doing no harm to the people you work with. Gay conversion therapy is harmful."

Dr. Benoit Dubé, a senior fellow at the Penn Medicine Program for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Health, says outlawing gay conversion therapy is vital for both patient safety and enforcing standards for mental health treatment.

"This law can add an extra layer of accountability," said Dubé, who is also a psychiatrist and associate professor at the University of Pennsylvania's Perelman School of Medicine. "We are protecting children from therapeutic abuse."

Dubé recalled one case involving a young patient whose parent sought treatment for their child. He saw signs that this parent couldn't come to terms with their child being gay.

"The parent really was the patient," Dubé said. "You hear about these things, but I never thought this would happen in Philadelphia."

Five states and Washington, D.C., have passed laws outlawing the practice of gay conversion therapy. Pennsylvania could be next.

WOMEN POWER

Women make gains in corner office but still lag far behind men, reports show

Canada, the United States and France have the highest percentage of women in leadership positions, with an average of one-third of women holding those roles.

Around the world, more and more women are being hired into upper-management slots in a variety of fields, according to a recent study by LinkedIn.

Women are taking on more leadership roles in the workplace, report finds. FLICKR

Women currently hold about 28 percent of all leadership positions available globally, according to the business networking site, a 3 percent increase compared to 2008.

"While there is still a gap, we are seeing significant strides," the study said.

It wasn't all good news, however.

According to a separate study in the Economic Policy Institute, women in the U.S. make only 79 cents on every dollar earned by men, held back in large part by the lack of access to higher-paying upper management positions.

The LinkedIn study, meanwhile, used information from working women in 10 countries. It sought to uncover the industries and positions where women are thriving.

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Conservatives rebel against Trump-backed Republican health care plan

Republican U.S. House of Representatives leaders unveiled legislation to do away with Obamacare, eliminating the requirement that most Americans obtain medical insurance and creating a system of tax credits to coax people to purchase private insurance on the open market.

President Donald Trump on Tuesday endorsed Republican legislation to replace the Obamacare healthcare law but it faced a rebellion by conservative groups and lawmakers who denounced it, complicating its chances for passage in the U.S. Congress.

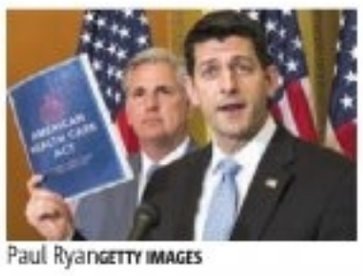
Speaker Paul Ryan said he could guarantee that he had enough votes to win passage of the measure in the House, adding that conservatives should be excited about the plan to repeal and replace Democratic former President Barack Obama's signature domestic policy achievement.

But conservatives slammed the proposal, with Utah Republican Senator Mike Lee calling it "exactly the type of back-room dealing and rushed process that we criticized Democrats for."

Trump said the plan was open to negotiation but said it had already earned support "from everybody." Vice President Mike Pence described it as a "framework," signaling it was far from its final form, and Health and Human Services Secretary Tom Price called it "a work in progress."

The proposal represented a key step toward carrying out pledges by Trump and congressional Republicans to dismantle Obamacare.

But lawmakers face pressure from constituents



Paul Ryan GETTY IMAGES

not to throw America's health care system into chaos, and some conservatives complained the bill did not go far enough in removing government from the health care industry. Republican Sen. Rand Paul of Kentucky decried it as "Obamacare Lite."

Democrats denounced the proposal, saying it would take away health insurance from millions of Americans and benefit the rich.

Conservative groups including Heritage Action for America, the Club for Growth, Americans for Prosperity and Freedom Partners, backed by the billionaire Republican donor Koch brothers, urged its defeat for different reasons.

The Club for Growth derided it as "RyanCare" and a "warmed-over substitute for government-run healthcare."

"We think you have to get rid of Obamacare completely," said conservative Republican Rep. Jim Jordan of Ohio, who announced plans to introduce his own bill to repeal Obamacare on Wednesday, the same day that House committees begin debating and considering amendments on the Republican plan.

Conservative opponents said the legislation maintains some Obamacare regulations and mandates that have caused rising insurance prices, creates a new entitlement in the form of tax credits and fails to embrace free-market ideals.

Instead of current income-based subsidies to buy a plan, the plan proposes tax credits, which would range from $2,000 to $4,000. REUTERS

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Four killed when freight train hits bus in Mississippi

A freight train slammed into a charter bus at a railroad crossing in Biloxi, Mississippi, on Tuesday, killing four people on the bus and leaving dozens of others injured, officials said.

Officials said the tour bus, which originated in Austin, Texas, and was heading to a casino, was stopped on the tracks for an unknown reason. Witnesses told local television station WLOX it got stuck there.

Biloxi city spokesman Vincent Creel confirmed the crossing had signs warning of its low ground clearance, which means a large vehicle could potentially become lodged on the tracks.

But he could not say if that is what occurred, adding that the crash was under investigation.

Three people on the bus were killed in the collision and a fourth person died after being transported from the scene, Biloxi Police Chief John Miller told a news conference.

Thirty-five passengers on the bus, which was carrying more than 40 people, were transported to area hospitals and a few other passengers escaped unharmed, Miller said.

Authorities airlifted some of the most badly injured victims to area hospitals. Nine of them were in critical condition, Creel said by telephone.

The crash follows an effort by Biloxi Mayor Andrew "FoFo" Gilich to close some rail crossings, with the stated goal of improving road safety in the city with a population of 45,000 people on the Gulf of Mexico.

But this crossing at Main Street, which was the site of another wreck between a train and a delivery truck on Jan. 5 with no injuries, was not one of those selected for possible closure, Creel said.

The freight train was operated by CSX, which said in a statement its crew members on board were uninjured. The crossing has flashing lights and gates, it added.

Sue Perkins, who was in a vehicle behind the bus and witnessed the crash, told WLOX the motorcoach appeared to get stuck because it was too long for the steep angle of the hill at the crossing.

The red lights at the crossing lit up and the safety gates descended with the bus stuck on the tracks, Perkins told the station. Then she saw the train in the distance and the conductor slammed on the horn but could not stop in time, she added. REUTERS

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House intelligence chief has seen no evidence to back Trump's wiretap charge

Rep. Devin Nunes (R-CA), the chairman of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence GETTY IMAGES

The chairman of the U.S. House of Representatives intelligence committee said on Tuesday he had seen no evidence to support President Donald Trump's allegation he was wiretapped by then-President Barack Obama during the 2016 presidential campaign.

Republican Representative Devin Nunes told reporters that if Trump's assertion were true, the leaders of Congress and the chairman of its two intelligence committees, known collectively as the "Gang of Eight," should have been briefed.

"I have not seen that evidence," Nunes said when asked about Trump's charge. "I think the bigger question that needs to be answered is whether or not Mr. Trump or any of his associates were in fact targeted by any of the intelligence agencies or law enforcement authorities."

"At this point, we don't have any evidence of that," he said.

Trump made the accusation in a series of early morning tweets on Saturday, without providing any evidence. A spokesman for Obama said it was not true.

Trump has since pressed the House and Senate intelligence committees to expand already planned probes into allegations that Russia meddled in the U.S. election to look into his charge. Nunes previously said his panel would examine the evidence.

"We are supposed to be kept up to speed on any pertinent counterintelligence investigation," Nunes said of the Gang of Eight. "If Trump or any other political campaign, or anybody associated with Trump, was under some type of investigation, that clearly should have risen to the Gang of Eight level."

Nunes said his committee planned to hold a series of public hearings as part of its Russia probe, beginning with a session on March 20 at which FBI Director James Comey and Admiral Mike Rogers, director of the National Security Agency, had been called to testify.

He said former Director of National Intelligence James Clapper, former CIA Director John Brennan and former acting Attorney General Sally Yates were also among those invited to appear.

"At this time, we are not going to subpoena anyone for that March 20th hearing," Nunes said. "But if we have to, we will subpoena all information that is pertinent to this investigation if people either ... don't want to appear or if the appropriate agencies do not provide the information we ask for." REUTERS

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Is Bennifer back?

It is very possible that Bennifer is gearing up for round two. That's right: According to Radar Online, Ben Affleck and Jennifer Lopez are giving their ill-fated, 2004-era romance another go. Oh, man.

When they were together, the couple elicited a reaction that was kind of like, "Those two are together? I don't really get it. They're both good-looking, I guess. But why? This seems weird. But I'm weirdly into it? I don't know!" And now, they're hoping to re-create those lukewarm, fuzzy feelings.

Mystery insiders told Radar that during a recent script meeting, Affleck, 44, and Lopez, 47, had the most insane, distracting chemistry. Can you believe it?! "She was actually blushing when he kissed her in greeting. There's so much chemistry between them, all the other folks could have been invisible!"

Affleck most recently had a very public affair with his kids' nanny, Christine Ouzounian, which is just a cool unimaginative thing celebrity dads like to do. He is still technically married to Jennifer Garner. Lopez split from Casper Smart — who can only really be described as her "young boy toy" — in 2016.

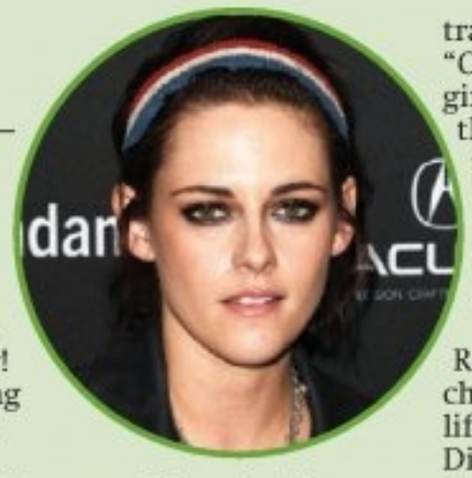
She also fake dated Drake for a hot minute.

Good luck, ya crazy kids! I'm rooting for you, maybe.

Why is K-Stew talking about Edward?

Kristen Stewart has a film to promote — the very mysterious "Personal Shopper" — and you know what means. It's time for some choice quotes about her defunct relationship with sparkly unicorn Robert Pattinson! Hooray!

"When I was dating Rob, the public were the enemy — and that is no way to live," Stewart tells the "Sunday Times. But don't worry: she's OK now, even if "Twilight" fans are still mad at her about the breakup. "I don't view the whole 'Twilight' blow-up as being generally traumatic," she says. "Once I started dating girls, it seemed like there was an opportunity to represent something really positive." Ooh, I see what you did there, Stewart.



Meanwhile, Robert Pattinson is chilling, living his best life, wearing luxurious Dior cropped sweaters and being almost married to FKA Twigs. Nobody asked him, but I think he's doing just fine, too.

Azealia Banks bit someone's boob

A New York judge has issued a warrant for Azealia Banks' arrest after a missed court date. She was supposed to be facing charges of misdemeanor assault (OK, wow), attempted assault (OK, damn) and disorderly conduct (OK, girl, get it together). And according to Complex, the charges stem from when Banks allegedly attacked a security guard at a New York nightclub. The special thing about this attack, though, is that it's widely known on the internet as the "boob-biting incident." That's right: When the 25-year-old aspiring witch allegedly attacked this woman, she not only punched her; she bit her boob. Because that's the appropriate response to someone not letting you into a private party. I mean, I've always thought sulking was the way to go, but, boy, was I wrong! Banks, of course, missed the court date because she confused the dates and was busy baring her entire backside at Paris Fashion Week. Thank you, Azealia Banks, for proving once again that you don't understand the concept of "chill."

Pete Davidson of 'SNL' is sober now, yay!

ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES

Pete Davidson — "Saturday Night Live's" resident "young person" — opened up in an Instagram post about his newfangled sobriety. The 23-year-old comedian, who has been kind of AWOL "SNL"- and social-media wise, wrote in a post that he's sober for the first time in eight years, and he's never been happier. "Just wanted to let you guys know I'm okay. I quit drugs and am happy and sober for the first time in 8 years," he wrote. "It wasn't easy, but I got a great girl, great friends and I consider myself a lucky man." Oh, P.S., the "great girl" he's talking about is Larry David's daughter, Cazzie. Noice! Davidson had previously opened up about his marijuana use, and how he initially started using weed to treat his Crohn's disease. If you're happy, I'm happy, random comedian. Congratulations!

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Keanu Reeves: I love doing action

The former Neo talks "John Wick: Chapter 2" and reuniting with Laurence Fishburne.

GABRIELA ACOSTA
@MetroPhilly
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Keanu Reeves is 52 years old. You wouldn't know that watching "John Wick: Chapter 2." In the sequel to the 2014 hit, his character — the world's best and most feared assassin — is blackmailed into taking a job that backfires badly. He winds up pursued by any colleague who thinks they can take him out. Bigger, crazier and maybe even better than the first, it also doubles down on the action, forcing the former Ted "Theodore" Logan into many an acrobatic scrape, many of them filmed in long takes where you can see how much he nails complicated and bruising fight choreography

GETTY

You kill a lot of people in this.
Yes, but they are after me.

Do you like doing your own stunts?
Yes. I don't do that many tricks, but I try to do as much action as possible. I like to take care of that relationship between the audience and the character. Besides, I love doing action scenes. And in this film there is much more judo, jiujitsu. The weapon handling is on another level. The action scenes in general are very advanced.

There are a couple of words like "gun fu" and "car fu" that are associated with the first "John Wick." How do you define them?
If you are working with a gun and you make a judo drop, that is "gun fu." You combine both. Same with a car: If you send someone flying with a car crashing into a wall, that's "car fu." [Laughs]

The first "John Wick" stayed in NYC, but this one has more of an international flavor. It even jumps over to Rome for a stretch.
The film's director [Chad Stahelski] and all the others involved in it wanted to expand the film's panorama more and were motivating us to do it that way. Chad had the idea of going to

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Keanu Reeves kills everyone once again in "John Wick: Chapter 2," now in theaters. NIKO TAVERNISE

Rome, because there is a long history of assassinations, as well as underground things — entities from beyond. That's why we had an Italian team. It was very cool to shoot in Rome and watch the movie's palette open that way.

And you get to briefly reunite with your "Matrix" co-star Laurence Fishburne.

It's the first time I've worked with Laurence since the "Matrix" trilogy, and it was a great experience. It's always good to work with him again. There's a very warm atmosphere on the set. He's a legend, right?

What do you like more: motorcycles or movies?

I'm always on the lookout for the weirdest, wildest thrills — something interesting. It could be something very commercial or independent, but I always like some darkness in my projects. In that respect, I think films and motorcycles are very similar. The strangest thing is that they both have left scars on my body.

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Strand of Oaks goes from 'Healing' to 'Hard Love'

Strand of Oaks returns home with "Heal" before hitting the road again. PROVIDED

Philly's Tim Showalter makes it all look easy, too.

A.D. AMOROSI
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Singer-songwriter Tim Showalter (aka Strand of Oaks) has toured the world relentlessly since the release of his 2014 breakout album, "Heal."

"I feel as if I just put my feet up," he says about being at home long enough to record his brand-new album "Hard Love." As depth-defying and mournfully emotional as "Heal" is, "Hard Love" finds Showalter rocking out and battling sadness again. But this time he wins handily while enjoying his marriage and cherishing the relationship with a brother he nearly lost. On March 10, he returns home for a gig at Union Transfer before hitting the road again.

Knowing and loving your first three primarily acoustic recordings, what do you say to critics and listeners who only got to you with "Heal"?

I was kind-of OK with people getting to me through "Heal" because it did seem like a debut — it sounded so radically different than my first three albums. I probably should have just changed the band's name.

You rarely play any of your old material?

It was all so introspective … [it] is difficult putting them into my new sound. I am trying however with this tour, during soundchecks for instance. I would love to be like My Morning Jacket … who can seamlessly pull out anything from their back catalog and make it seem like new. Oddly enough, it was when I had one eight-day break during those shows that I recorded the first version of "Hard Love."

You recorded two takes of your new album. Why?

Because though I couldn't stop making music — that new music wasn't ready to be a record. The label, me, my friends — we all knew it wasn't right. I should've used that time to stay home and pet my cats, or hang with my wife. So when I did stop a few months later, I walked around Mount Airy, had coffee, hit a reset button and recorded it in Brooklyn. Plus, I had to stop writing new songs. It was becoming an excuse for me to not interact with the outside world. Sounds weird, right?

Well, you build your own prison.

I needed to make friends, learn to paint, support my wife's poetry, just be a person. From pre-"Heal" through to the "Heal" tour's end — it was five years of nonstop traveling and playing.

Can you tell us about "Taking Acid and Talking with My Brother"?

I nearly lost my younger brother John to a birth defect nobody knew about. His heart stopped while I was on tour in 2015 right between my shows at Lollapalooza and Made in America. My mom called and told me he had cardiomyopathy. He was in an induced coma at age 26, and two weeks in, we never knew. The whole time I kept thinking that I had written this sad, heartbroken album and that yet, none of it compared to this. Luckily he got better, completely better — but it was harder and more intense than any acid trip you'll ever go on.

With "Heal" you made the exposed heart your calling card. What were you trying to show with "Hard Love"?

The one thing that I wanted to do with "Hard Love" — or realized after it was done — was to not be an apologist. I didn't want to portray any victims, me or anyone else. "Cry" is not me talking, not the narrator, but everyone talking back at me. It is more of an argument than a blame. "Hard Love" is a conversation. "Quit It" is a conversation. Talking back and forth didn't happen with "Heal." That was just me yelling at the world and going "me, me, me." This time, it's "you, you, you."

If you go:

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Catch Brett Davis keeping it not real this weekend. ALL PHOTOS BY MINDY TUCKER

'Brett Davis Is Not Real' brings a different kind of hilarity to Philly

The 2015 Andy Kaufman Award winner comes to Good Good Comedy Theater.

MIKE FENN
@MetroPhilly
letters@metro.us

The very unique — yet nevertheless hilarious — New York-based comedy show "Brett Davis Is Not Real: A One-Man Nightmare" will be visiting Philadelphia for just one night on March 11. Of course, don't let the show's title fool you: Mr. Brett Davis is all too real, and the comedic force is heralded by audiences and fellow comedians alike. He is the most recent winner of the coveted Andy Kaufman Award, which recognizes new talent in the spirit of its namesake. Past winners include such nationally recognized comedians as Reggie Watts and Kristen Schaal. Davis wrote and produced the IFC series "Boy Band" and currently hosts a weekly live public access TV show, "The Special Without Brett Davis," which has counted Oscar nominee Michael Shannon and infamous ECW wrestler New Jack as guests.

"In this show you'll see 'Brett Davis' perform as various horrible-yet-sensitive characters, ranging from sex demigods to depressed poetry professors," Davis says, making sure to surround his own name in quotes.

"This show is a showcase for them all, the result of countless nights of being the weird guy at the stand-up show with the bag of wigs."

Davis is quite aware of his getups in the stand-up comedy scene, where performers typically work with little more than the microphone. "The comics would ask, 'Is this guy for real?'" Davis explains. "This show is a definitive answer to that question. No."

Fittingly, the show will be put on by Good Good Comedy Theater, which is renowned for staging experimental comedy shows seven nights a week. While its focus is naturally on local acts, it will occasionally open its stage to touring talent such as Davis.

"Brett Davis is one of the best character performers, he's always doing something weird and unexpected in his performances," Good Good Comedy Theater co-founder Kate Banford says. "He's thrilling to watch."

If you go:

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Chef Chris Santos may have three restaurants in New York, but he's doing his part to bring back the house party.

Santos is best known for his Lower East Side hot spot Stanton Social, and while shared plates may be the hottest trend in dining now, he's been serving up globally inspired crowd-pleasers like fish tacos and ravioli in bite-size portions meant to be passed around since it opened back in 2005.

"This culture of ordering everything for the table and everyone sharing is becoming more and more popular," he says. "To me, that's always been the logical way to go."

When it comes to your guests, it's also a natural icebreaker. "It's best to gather at a table where everyone is sharing food; it subliminally invites a very social kind of interaction that you may not get if everyone orders their own thing and is just staring down at their plate."

To help get you started on having more parties at home, he's collected many of his iconic recipes, from French onion soup dumplings to Oreo pancakes, into a cookbook titled "Share." More than just a collection of recipes, it's a guide to taking the hassle out of cooking for a crowd, and encourages more people to get together without needing a special occasion — like his own family did.

"My mother is not a big cook, but she was good at everything else," he says about dedicating the book to her. "My restaurants cultivate an atmosphere of conviviality and having a good time; these are all lessons I learned from my mom."

Here are Santos' tips for taking the stress out of your next gathering.

Parties aren't just for dinner

"Share" has a whole section devoted to brunch, the meal everyone loves, but almost always ends up eating out. Having it at home means no waiting for tables, refills on those bottomless drinks and less pressure to get dressed up. "We're focusing on the 'unch' part of brunch, you're doing it at 3 o'clock in the afternoon," says Santos with a laugh. "Sundays are a great day for gathering people — and who doesn't like day drinking?"

Make your food social

Santos' philosophy is "food should be fun to eat," but it should also be fun to make. That means keeping you, the host, in the mix rather than in the kitchen. The recipes in "Share" remain largely unchanged from their restaurant versions, and that's because the secret to running a popular restaurant is the same as a good dinner party: lots of prep work so that everything can be pulled together at the last minute. Santos also suggests choosing dishes that people can easily pitch in on, like dumplings. And if there's something you're terrible at or don't want to make, he won't dock you points for asking Seamless to pitch in.

Do drinks right

An element of the party that often gets overlooked, according to Santos, is cocktails. People will get beer and some wine, and they might have vodka and orange juice on hand, but no one puts together a cocktail thinking they're too much work. "Share" includes a section that focuses "not just on cocktails but specifically cocktails that can be made in a batch, in advance, that you can then serve in pitchers," says Santos. It shows a level of attention and care, without having to spend the party as a bartender.

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5 Players Eagles fans should keep an eye out for

The NFL rumor mill keeps on churning regarding Philly and these high-profile players.

EVAN MACY
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evan.macy@metro.us

By the time you read this article, Adam Schefter or Ian Rapoport has probably tweeted a half dozen times about one or more of these players of interest — each of whom could be of great service to the Eagles this offseason.

The team is expected to be active on the trade market as constant rumors about Brandin Cooks suggest, as does their limited salary cap space. But they will also be on the hunt for free agent adds as well.

With the official league year and free agency starting Thursday, here are a few names to make sure to track over the next few days.

1 Brandin Cooks

The Eagles have been linked to the Saints' 23-year-old stud wide receiver for two seasons now and his price tag via the trade market is a first round pick. Should the Eagles relinquish the 14th overall pick for an expiring contract? They would no doubt need to ink an extension as part of the deal — but many in Philadelphia have spoken out in support of the move. Many also surmise that Jordan Matthews could be shipped off as a correllary to this move (or backup quarterback Chase Daniel).

Is an A.J. Bouye signing in the cards for the cornerback-challenged Eagles? GETTY IMAGES

2 A.J. Bouye

According to reports from NJ.com and Elliot Shorr-Parks, the Eagles have been in talks with the agent of the Texans' young cornerback. The Eagles have a big need at cornerback, and at 25 years old, Bouye is among the best available free agents. Their cap space will be an issue here however, as they have just over $11 million and would certainly need to wiggle some more room in order to make a deal with a big name like the ones listed.

3 Torrey Smith

The Eagles have been interested in Smith for a while and there were rumors of a possible trade earlier this year. Now that the 49ers have announced the speedy wideout has been cut, there is a good chance Philly could make a run at signing the one-time Super Bowl champ. Smith is 28 and also is rumored to be interested in coming back to the East Coast to rejoin the Ravens, the team that drafted him out of Maryland.

4 Kenny Stills

Stills is another extremely attractive receiver in a deep free agent market. He's just one year older than Cooks but wont cost the Eagles a first round draft pick. He had a breakout year in 2016 collecting 726 receiving yards, nine touchdowns and 17.1 yards per catch. He would be the deep threat Philly badly needs to help Carson Wentz stretch the field.

5 Terrelle Pryor

According to a Monday report, the Eagles are one of five teams interested in Pryor's services following a 1,000 yard season in Cleveland. They join Steelers, Giants, 49ers and Titans with interest in the 27-year-old Browns star. His former team has an NFL record $104 million in cap space and will likely have a leg up on how much they can offer.

How the NFL combine affects the Eagles' draft strategy, draft board

Will the Eagles target speedster John Ross? ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES

Which players have increased their draft stock as the Eagles prepare to pick 14th this April?

LUKE MILLER
@LukeFM7
sports@metro.us

The 2017 NFL Draft combine has ended and the story of the week is Washington wide receiver John Ross' record-setting 4.22 second 40-yard dash. Already seen as a first-round prospect and placed just a bit below Western Michigan's Corey Davis and Clemson's Mike Williams on most draft boards, this time will elevate Ross into the first-receiver-taken conversation.

It should certainly elevate him into the list of possibilities for the Eagles when selection No. 14 rolls around. A 37-inch vertical didn't do anything to alleviate concerns about his 5-foot-11 height and contesting jump balls, but adding Ross (17 touchdowns in 2016) would give the Eagles the deep threat they've been missing since DeSean Jackson was abruptly dismissed. Fans can catch more of Ross and the other Washington prospects at their pro day Saturday.

Another receiver turning heads at the combine further down the draft boards was Penn State's Chris Godwin, who said he met with the Eagles. Godwin has made a living going up and grabbing deep balls for the Nittany Lions, averaging over 16 yards per catch and scoring 11 touchdowns in 2016, but answered questions about his speed with a 4.42 in the 40. He saved his best for big games in college, with 460 yards spread across three bowl game performances.

Receivers weren't the only ones showing off their pass-catching abilities, however. After a disappointing 10 reps on the bench press, Stanford running back Christian McCaffrey recovered with impressive performances across the rest of the drills and particularly showed the route-running smoothness that has made him a dual (and when you consider his return game, triple) threat in the college game. Not that you needed to look further than his NCAA record 3,864 all-purpose yards in 2015.

McCaffrey and Tennessee's Alvin Kamara cemented their position right behind LSU's Leonard Fournette and Florida State's Dalvin Cook, and may have gained some ground on the latter, who had a disappointing week, but did meet with the Eagles. Other prospects vying to move up the running board struggled to showcase speed (Wisconsin's Corey Clements) or were sidelined due to injury (Texas' D'Onta Foreman suffered a stress fracture in his foot) or lack of invitation (Oklahoma's Joe Mixon).

The Eagles' other biggest positional need, cornerback, was full of newsworthy performances on the NFL's proving grounds. Ohio State's Marshon Lattimore increased his case to be the first corner off the board in what might be the most talented class the NFL has ever seen. Lattimore ran a 4.36 40-yard, while some of the other top prospects — most notably Florida's Teez Tabor who ran a 4.62 — struggled.

A pair of Los Angeles prospects, Southern California's Adoree' Jackson and UCLA's Fabian Moreau, were ready for the combine spotlight as well. Moreau's name isn't usually connected to the first round — but Temple's Haason Reddick is continuing to climb. The linebacker flashed enough speed — 4.52 in the 40 — and athleticism to find himself listed in most of the "winners" columns around the league.

Penn State's Chris Godwin

It appears the Eagles have at least one thing going for them in their meetings: Brian Dawkins. More than one young defensive back brought up Dawkins in their interviews this weekend as an inspiration.

Safety is hardly the most pressing need on the Eagles, but a quick shout-out to Connecticut safety Obi Melifonwu may give fans flashbacks to the draft two years ago. Melifonwu, at 6-foot-4 and 224 pounds, took the combine apart Sunday. He posted a 4.40 second 40, a 44-inch vertical leap (a result he was visibly disappointed in) and a 141-inch broad jump. The performance was reminiscent of now-Dallas Cowboy but former fellow Huskie defensive back Byron Jones, who many hoped the Birds would take in the first round of the 2015 draft after he set a new world record in the broad jump.

His rise up the charts is making him an unlikely fit for the Eagles — not a lot of people are calling for a linebacker in the first or second round — and he's already been highlighted as a player the Eagles focused on at the East-West Shrine game. He ran a 4.35 40 and was among the top corners in vertical and broad jumps. Jackson clocked in at 4.42 and tracked the ball in drills with the ease that has made him a touted ballhawk (five interceptions in 2016) and return specialist (four return touchdowns in 2016 alone). He should be establishing his spot in the first round.

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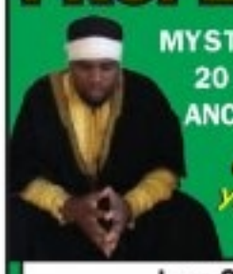

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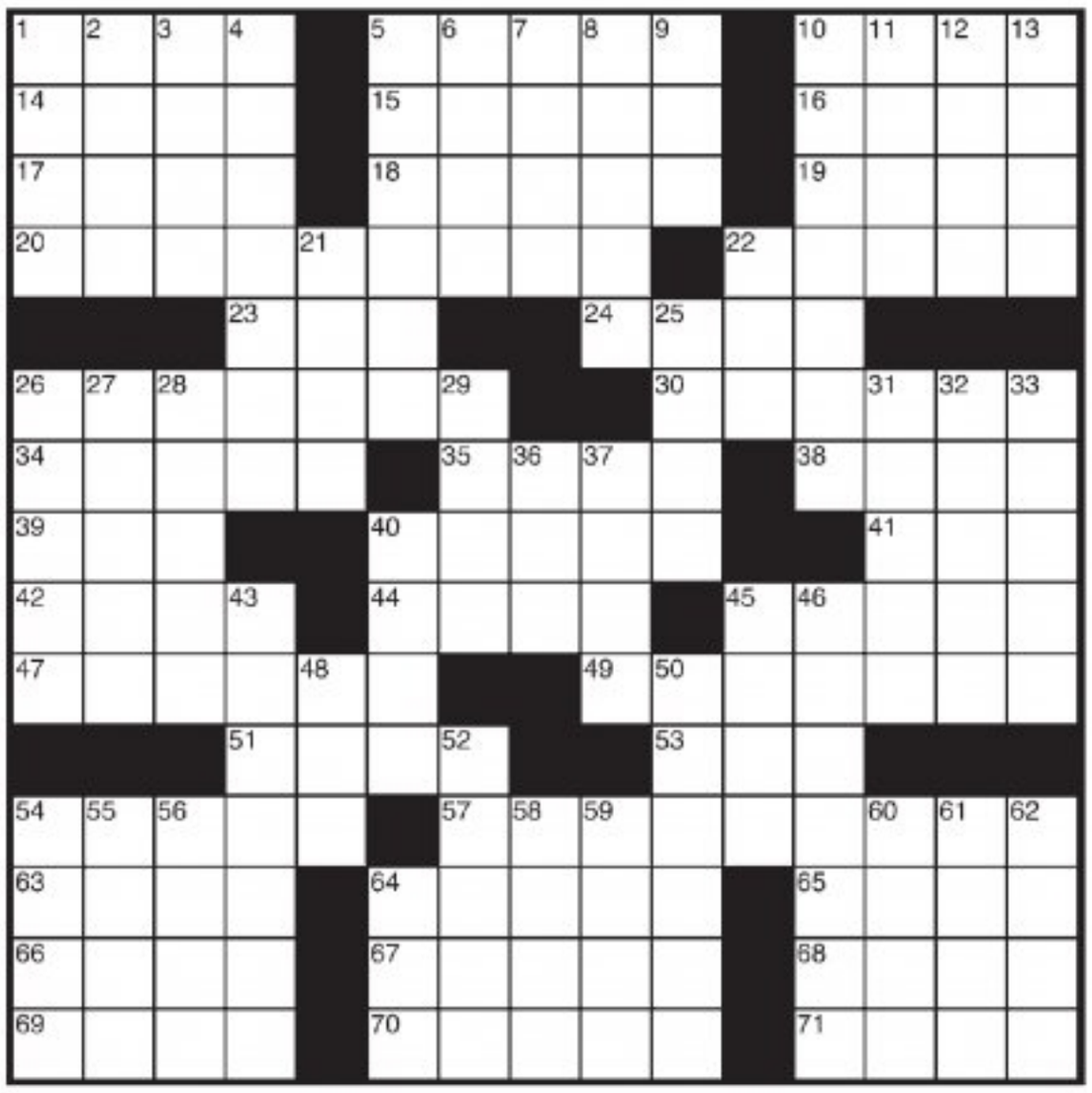

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63 "-- Ha'i"
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55 Silo companion
56 Touched down
58 "Wool" on clay sheep
59 Throw a party
60 Enthusiasm, plus
61 Therefore
62 Break
64 Surprised cries

metro.us/sudoku

easy

7						2		4
	8			4	7	3		
					9	1		
	5	7			1		2	3
		8		5		6		
6	2		7			4	9	
		4	1					
		5	4	9			8	
8		3						6

hard

4						1		
				5	1	2		3
3								7
8			7		4		5	1
		2	8		5	4		
5	7		1		9			2
1								6
2		5	4	9				
		3						4

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Aries Choose to do something that will give you a boost. A spa day, reward or get-together with someone you love to spend time with will ease stress and lift your spirits.

Taurus A feud will break out at home if you don't compromise. Overreacting or dealing with someone who is being excessive is best handled with intelligence and compassion.

Gemini Don't get angry, get even. The sweetest revenge is your own success. Buckle down and aim to reach your goals. You'll gain respect and acknowledgement.

Cancer Excess will be your downfall. Don't associate with people encouraging you to eat, drink, indulge or overspend. Stay focused on building your fortune.

Leo A get-together with someone you find interesting and informative will ignite a host of exciting new ideas and plans. Romance is in the stars and will improve your life.

Virgo Stay on top of situations. Make your voice heard using diplomacy and intelligence. Refuse to engage with emotionally explosive and impulsive people or groups.

Libra Where personal or business relationships are concerned, try to close the gap between how you see things unfolding and how those you encounter want to proceed.

Scorpio Learn from the experts. Observe what's going on around you. Look for innovative ways to incorporate the ideas that sprout from the observations you make.

Sagittarius Overspending on items you don't need will put you in a precarious financial position. Point-of-purchase items and spending on someone out of guilt will bring stress.

Capricorn Be precise and factual in your dealings. If you cannot afford something or do not want to get involved in a joint venture, say so. Impulsiveness will lead to loss.

Aquarius Size up your situation at work or school, and consider how you get along with your peers. You will learn more if you share information. Hard work will pay off.

Pisces Put pressure on anyone who lets you down or doesn't honor a commitment. Call in favors and make everyone, including you, accountable for their actions. EUGENIA LAST

Yesterday's answers

H	A	L	V	E	S	■	I	D	A	■	A	P	P	T
A	M	O	E	B	A	■	M	R	I	■	C	O	L	O
M	I	G	N	O	N	■	P	A	D	■	C	L	A	P
■	■	■	I	N	D	I	A	N	A	P	O	L	I	S
F	A	N	C	Y	■	N	C	O	■	R	U	S	T	Y
I	S	E	E	■	A	C	T	■	K	I	N	■	■	■
E	P	A	■	F	R	O	■	B	E	S	T	E	D	■
F	I	T	■	A	T	M	■	L	A	M	■	N	I	L
■	C	O	A	R	S	E	■	I	N	S	■	S	A	O
■	■	■	T	R	Y	■	G	N	U	■	T	U	N	A
A	O	R	T	A	■	B	O	T	■	A	H	E	A	D
S	C	H	E	H	E	R	A	Z	A	D	E	■	■	■
T	H	I	N	■	K	I	T	■	G	A	I	N	E	D
R	E	N	D	■	E	N	E	■	A	G	R	E	E	D
O	R	E	S	■	D	E	E	■	R	E	S	O	R	T

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